



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio head coach Ardie Eleck (right) trots out the Opening Day 2012 batting order towards home plate in Farmington, N.M., on Thursday, March 15.

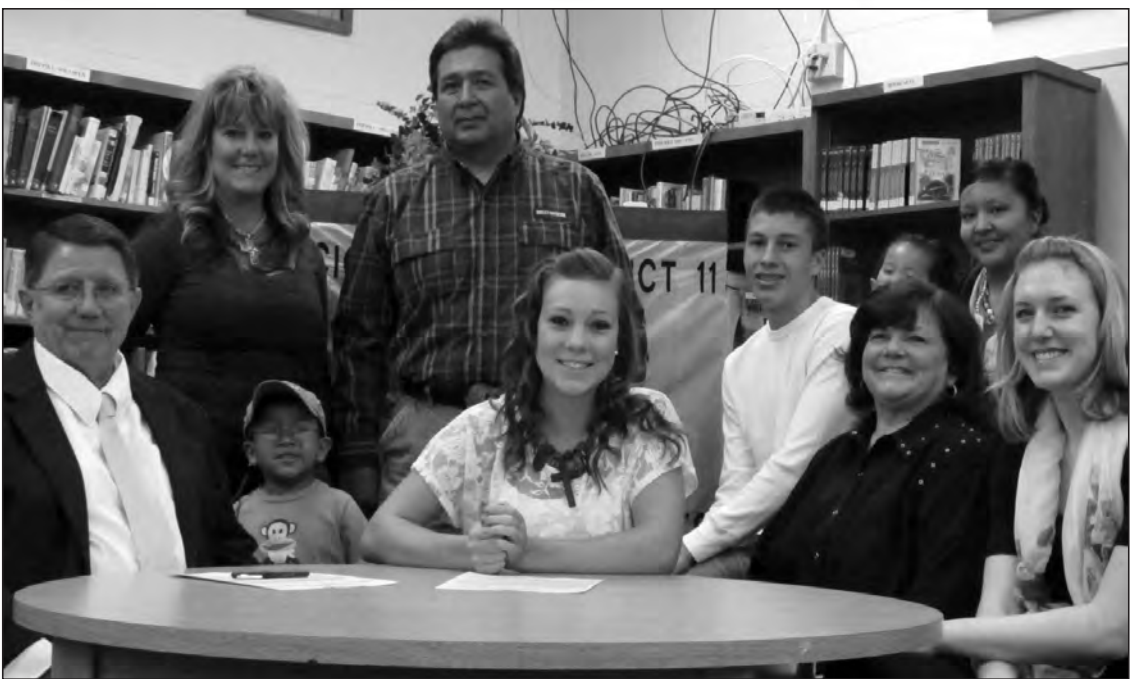


photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio senior Rylie Jefferson (center) after fully signing her national letter of intent on Thursday, March 15 to become a member of Colorado Northwestern Community College Spartan Volleyball this fall. Joining her for the moment, held in the Ignacio High library, were (standing, left to right) mother Teena Jefferson, nephew Chad Benally, father Robert Jefferson, brother Clayton Jefferson, niece Haiden Benally, and sister Tristian Benally; (seated, left to right) CNCC Head Coach Richard Barker, Rylie Jefferson, IHS Athletic Director Melanie Taylor, and IHS Head Coach Bayli Stillwell.

## Cats .333 thru first weekend

By Joel Priest  
Special to the Drum

Ten extra-base hits helped the Ignacio baseball team administer a St. Patrick's Day smacking, making it easier to bury the season-opening beatdown incurred on the Ides of March.

And behind Paco Mounts' complete-game pitching performance, the Bobcats made short work of San Juan Basin League familiars Dove Creek, 12 runs to 2, in closing out the Piedra Vista Tri-States JV Invitational in Farmington, N.M., and recording their first victory of the 2012 season.

"I was pleased with the boys," said head coach Ardie Eleck. "They hit the ball really well. Struck out eight times, four coming on called third strikes, so we've got to get the kids a little more aggressive."

Having cracked a long RBI-double to center on Worley Field at Civitan Park late in the day-one 19-4 shelling courtesy the 4A Aztec (N.M.) JV — which started an eighth-grader at the hot corner — Ignacio senior short-stop Tyler Young ripped the Bulldogs for a single, double, and homer on the same diamond.

Classmate Jesse Vigil, manning first base, avenged his initial 1-for-3 outing with a 4-for-4 day versus DC, including a pair of doubles, and sophomore Clayton Jefferson (who debuted at third base) knocked a two-bagger and a three-bagger to keep Dove Creek reeling.

"Paco threw 70 pitches, struck out nine," said Eleck, having first used Mounts for an inning of relief of Opening Day starter Sonny Sanchez (three more arms later saw stints against the Tigers), "and gave up just three



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

First on the hill in 2012, Ignacio senior pitcher Sonny Sanchez deals during the Bobcats' opener on Thursday, March 15 in Farmington, N.M., against the Aztec (N.M.) JV.

hits and walked one. Pitched very well for us."

The Bobcats, ravaged by last spring's graduation, showed good progression from the first-through-third games — a 7-4 loss to 3A Shiprock, N.M., went down Day 2 — of their new itinerary, with Eleck pleased to utilize nearly all his 16-player roster in the process.

Dove Creek, with Jessica Heaton and Zoey Young in its lineup, had fallen to 4A Miyamu-

ra (Gallup, N.M.) by a 10-9 result on Day 2 to set up the unscheduled meeting between SJB� foes.

Up next for IHS will be a trip to non-league Sargent on March 27 (3 p.m. start), with some time off then before their circuit opener April 10 (4:30 p.m.) at home against Dove Creek. Non-league action Mar. 22 at home against 3A Pagosa Springs was completed after the Drum went to print.

## Membership Memories



The Chieftain archives

"Reg Howe: Portrait of a Champion" was the headline of an article by Ted Foster appearing in The Chieftain on Thursday, March 12, 1970. Calling Howe's "one of the most brilliant basketball careers in Basin A League history," Foster said Ignacio's surprising 68-66 loss to Bayfield in the league's tournament finals "robbed many of the fans in Denver of an opportunity to see one of the best guards in Colorado in action." Now a Southern Ute tribal elder, Howe amassed 1,582 points in his high school career, averaging 20.3 per game (26.2 in his senior year) and recording a personal-best 45 points in a single outing. One rival coach's best idea for containing Howe: "Kidnap him two hours before the game." Howe led his team to a 19-1 record in his last season, and his legacy lives on the highly successful Ignacio High boys' teams of recent years.

## CNCC Ryl-ed up for Jefferson!

Setter signs with Spartans

By Joel Priest  
Special to the Drum

Hailing from Colorado's northwest, Bayli Stillwell was surely sought by colleges region-wide.

And it wasn't all that long ago the Volleycats' youthful leader signed her name on a line, declaring where she wanted to prolong her student-athlete career. On Thursday, March 15, Stillwell experienced for the first time as a mentor the sight a pupil committing to an in-state program as Ignacio High senior setter Rylie Jefferson autographed her letter of intent to suit up this fall for the Rangely-based Colorado Northwestern Community College Spartans.

"I'm excited for her to be able to do that," Stillwell said. "And I just know she has so much fun ahead of her — hard-work fun — and the friendships and experiences that she'll have ... are priceless. She deserves that."

With future coach Richard Barker attending the gathering inside the IHS library, Jefferson signed her letter shortly after 8 a.m.

"What really sold me was the atmosphere. I'd been up there last weekend and saw the campus, met with the girls," Jefferson said, "and got acquainted, played with them, and we meshed well. I felt comfortable up there. It was nice, and he gave me a good offer. So I took it; no way to pass it up."

"We have tried to reach out to this corner of the state, and being a community college in western Colorado ... this is our community," Barker said.

The community includes Jefferson, parents Robert and Teena and the family, but also others around, including 4A Montezuma-Cortez outside hitter Amanda Chappell, who'd signed eight days before, giving Barker and assistant April Sanchez a rare pair from the southwest.

On CNCC's 2011 roster, seven of the 12 Spartans were from the state's northwest, while just three were from the Front Range and



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

On Thursday March, 15, Rylie Jefferson signed her national letter of intent to pursue volleyball at Colorado Northwestern Community College in Rangely, Colo. Head coach Richard Barker represented the college at the signing. Jefferson's family and the Ignacio High School athletic faculty were there for support during the signing in the school's library.

only two came from out-of-state (both from Utah). Competing in the widespread Scenic West Athletic Conference (NJCAA Division I, Region XVIII), the Spartans struggled to a 3-20 match record with one triumph coming by forfeit.

But having strived in the widespread Class 2A/1A San Juan Basin League, finding success only moderately more available — Ignacio went 7-11 overall in 2011, up from 6-17 in 2010 — Jefferson said she's been prepared for how tough the task ahead will be.

"It teaches you a lot of perseverance, and ways to get yourself through the games," she said. "Play as hard as you can until it's over — every last point."

"Someone told me, 'You get

worse before you get better,' and it's true," Stillwell said of the initial college volleyball breaking-in phase. "You're learning so much new stuff, and you're being held accountable at a higher level than you are in high school, but I think she can do it."

"She's the only player I had who worked out consistently hard all summer for this season," the coach continued. "She had her sights set on trying to play after high school, and she didn't give up. So for her it's a culmination of hard work being realized, and I'm really proud of her."

"I think she has very good skills, very advanced skills, which goes

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## Soccer finally gets started

By Joel Priest  
Special to the Drum

Pitching a shutout for the majority of the second half was splendid.

The problem was the visiting Mean Moose were already cruising away toward victory, spoiling the Ignacio Lady Bobcats' much-awaited 2012 soccer debut March 17 at IHS Field.

Ignacio's scheduled opener, triggering a 3A Southwestern-only slate, was to have been a week earlier at home against Telluride. But with a good number of his roster still generating crowd noise as members of

the Ignacio Cheer Squad for the State-hopeful boys' basketball team as that date neared, head coach Andrew Fenity had little choice than to postpone the match.

Alamosa improved to 2-1 in the SWL (3-1 overall) with the 8-0 victory, while IHS dipped to 0-1 overall/league, having trailed 5-nil at intermission — but fortunately with as many substitutes as goals allowed, giving Fenity the benefit of rotatable legs throughout the contest.

That's something Ignacio's next scheduled opponent, Bayfield, never lacked under skipper Jennifer Zelinski, and which

has already helped the Lady Wolverines dash out to a 3-0 start—including a 3-1 home win over THS on March 17.

The match — weather permitting — would have been completed after the Drum went to print, however. Next on the schedule, March 30 at 4 p.m., would be the Lady Bobcats' trip to Down Valley Park outside Placerville (also weather-permitting) for Round 1 with THS.

An April 10 (4 p.m.) home date against Center is shown next, with a drive to Solar Ranch to face Ridgeway following three afternoons later. Pagosa Springs then visits Saturday, April 14 at 11 a.m.